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UNHCR ACTIVITIES FINANCED BY VOLUNTARY FUNDS: REPORT FOR 1994-1995 AND PROPOSED PROGRAMMES AND BUDGET FOR 1996

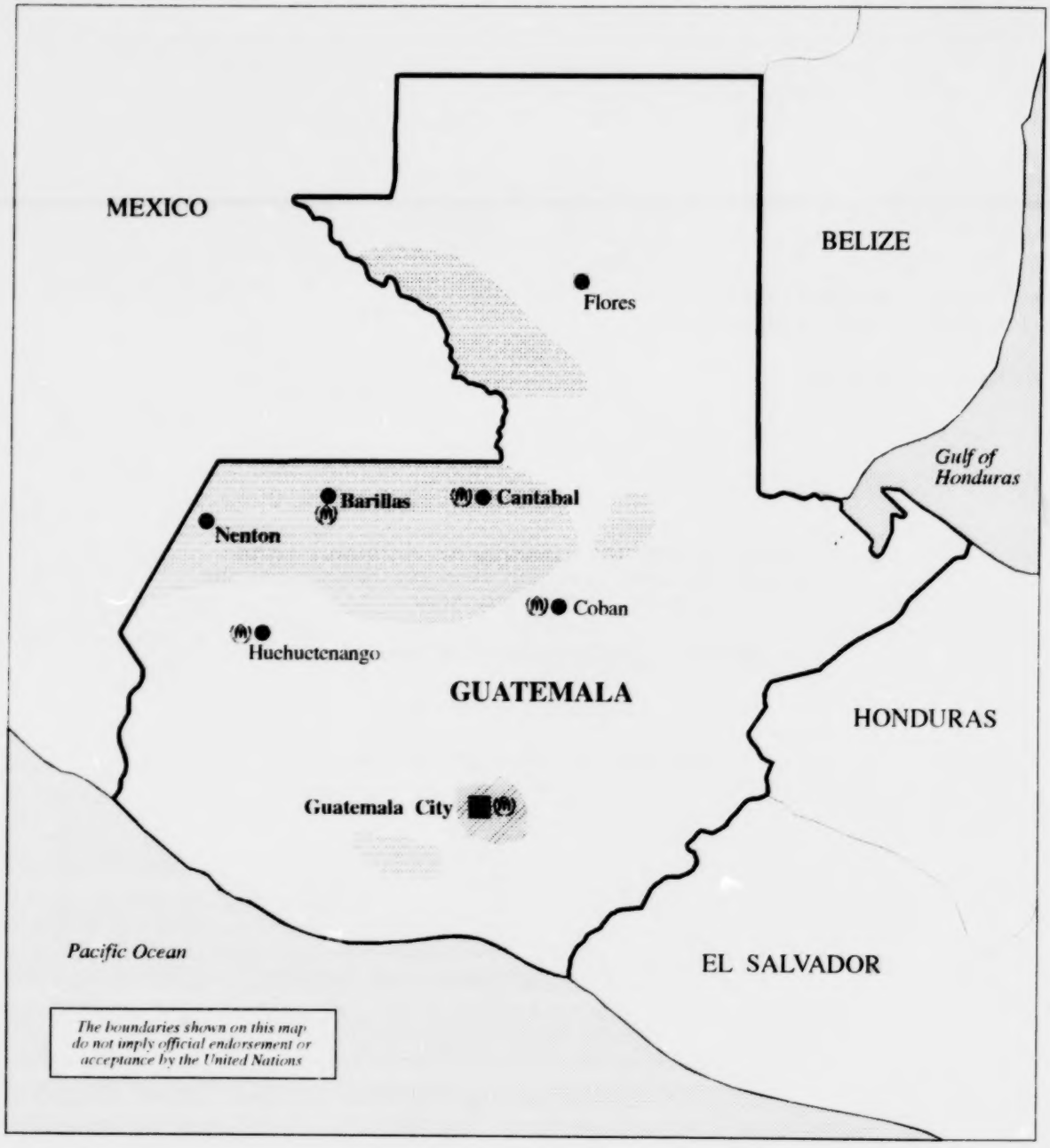
PART IV. THE AMERICAS AND THE CARIBBEAN

Section 2 - Guatemala

(submitted by the High Commissioner)

GE.95-02218

GUATEMALA


MEXICO
BELIZE
Flores
Gulf of Honduras
Barillas
Cantabal
Nenton
Coban
Huchuctenango
GUATEMALA
HONDURAS
Guatemala City
Pacific Ocean
EL SALVADOR
The boundaries shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations
0
100
Km.
Capital
Town or village
UNHCR Office
Returnee Area
Refugee Area

IV.2 GUATEMALA

1. Beneficiary population

1. At 31 December 1994, the recognized refugee population in Guatemala numbered 4,700 persons comprising 2,400 Salvadorans, 2,200 Nicaraguans, 35 Hondurans and 65 from other countries. These numbers show a considerable reduction, resulting from the ongoing refugee census, which has allowed UNHCR to maintain a far more accurate control of actual refugee beneficiaries.

2. During 1994, 6,018 Guatemalan refugees repatriated, mostly from Mexico. A further 4,768 returned during the first three months of 1995, bringing the total number of repatriants to more than 21,230 since 1987.

2. Developments in 1994 and 1995

(a) **Refugees**

3. During 1994, only 40 refugees requested assistance for voluntary repatriation. Therefore, activities were concentrated more on local integration than voluntary repatriation. In that context, a census and a socio-economic survey of the refugee population were undertaken. Efforts were made to define the methodology for managing the scheme of mixed credits/grants for small businesses. During 1995, residence permits and naturalization are being facilitated for refugees deciding to remain in Guatemala. The refugee census has demonstrated that a significant proportion of refugees have attained self-sufficiency, and that the previously registered refugee population has been reduced by approximately 50 per cent. Based on those results, the overall amount of assistance foreseen under the local integration project has been reduced accordingly.

(b) **Returnees**

4. During 1994, four collective returns of Guatemalan refugees from Mexico, comprising a total of 4,123 persons, took place. The total of 6,018 returnees during the year was significantly lower compared to the original figure of 10,000 persons expected to repatriate during 1994.

5. Both collective returns and individual repatriations are taking place as foreseen in 1995. During the first four months, collective returns took place to Ixcan, Alta Verapaz, Petén and the southern coast. Together with individual repatriations to Huehuetenango, nearly 5,000 refugees had returned by the end of the first four months of 1995. Although it is still difficult to assess, a planning figure of 10,000 returnees is being maintained for the whole of 1995.

6. The collective returns planned for 1995 continue to encounter serious obstacles, mainly involving the scarcity of available land, the recovery of refugee-owned lands occupied by others, the high cost of land to be purchased, and the release of land and transfer of legal titles to the returnees. To support land negotiations, UNHCR facilitated during 1994 more than 125 refugee visits to Guatemala averaging two to three persons per visit.

7. Some quick impact projects (QIPs) were postponed during 1994 due to an uncertain funding situation. By the end of 1994, a total of 91 QIPs were undertaken. During 1995, QIPs are being reoriented to place greater emphasis on vocational training and productive projects, and to reduce investments in infrastructure, where increased governmental responsibility will be encouraged. Emphasis continues to be placed on promoting a gender focus in all QIPs so as to ensure the equitable participation of men and women. In line with People-Oriented Planning, attention will be paid to the reintegration needs of returnee children.

3. 1996 country programmes

(a) Objectives

8. **Refugees**: Local integration is seen as the preferred durable solution for the refugees who, despite improved conditions in their countries of origin, have not opted to repatriate to El Salvador or Nicaragua. A local integration project initiated in 1994 will concentrate on consolidating legal initiatives in close coordination with the Guatemalan Government and on providing material support for socio-economic integration. The targets for refugee integration by end 1996 are 60 per cent. In addition, efforts to promote the long-term protection of refugee rights will include support for the elaboration of national legislation to apply the 1951 Convention and the creation of a national structure to undertake refugee eligibility determination.

9. Voluntary repatriation is considered the most appropriate durable solution for the few non-Central American refugees. Where local integration is desired by the refugees, it will be facilitated whenever possible.

10. **Returnee programme**: It is expected that the repatriation and returnee reintegration process will continue at a regular pace in 1996. The destinations of collective returns will depend on the results of land visits to be undertaken in 1995 but are estimated to continue to be mainly in the regions of Huehuetenango, Ixcan, Alta Verapaz, the southern coast and Petén. Although it is expected that UNHCR may increasingly expand its individual assistance activities to include internally displaced in returnee areas, much depends on the results of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Army (URNG)-Government peace negotiations, which makes it difficult to forecast the precise nature or scope of such assistance at this stage.

11. As in previous years, the Office of the Chief of Mission (OCM) Guatemala will continue to closely coordinate with the UNHCR Regional Office in Mexico the transportation of Guatemalan refugees from Mexico and will continue to provide through the Guatemalan Commissions for Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons (CEAR) reception facilities and individual assistance in basic shelter and agricultural inputs. Confederacion de Religiosos de Guatemala (CONFREGUA) will also continue to facilitate returnees' personal documentation issued by municipal authorities. In view of WFP's intention to discontinue its operations in Chiapas, Mexico, efforts will be made to ensure that it continues to cover returnee food assistance during the initial reintegration phase through emergency rations and food-for-work schemes.

12. Material and logistical assistance will be provided for the repatriation and reception of an estimated 8,000 Guatemalan refugees to return through UNHCR-assisted repatriations. Major objectives of the programme are the resolution of problems concerning land tenure or access to land before the actual repatriation/collective return process, and to ensure that movements occur in an orderly fashion with the consent of all concerned parties.

13. QIPs will continue to be implemented to enhance opportunities for returnees' reintegration and reconciliation with the local population. It is expected that there will be an expansion in both the number and scope of these activities that link returnee aid to development actions in the zones most affected by conflict and poverty, where virtually all returnees settle. Both individual and community-focused assistance under the returnee programme are expected to continue until 1998.

14. To promote the sustainability of reintegration, attempts will be made to identify appropriate income-generating activities which ensure environmental sustainability in collective returnee settlements located in ecologically fragile areas, and in environmentally-protected zones.

15. An increased number of national NGOs under the coordination of the Canadian NGO Centre Canadien d'Etudes et de Coopération Internationale (CECI) will implement QIPs which will be sustained beyond the QIP phase by ensuring from the outset the continuation of activities through development-funded programmes. The operational capacity of national NGOs will be strengthened, with a view to the gradual phasing down of UNHCR reintegration activities. Dialogue and cooperation between United Nations agencies, especially UNDP, government institutions and NGOs will be promoted in order to increase the scope of development actions in returnee-affected areas and complete the pending agenda of the post-CIREFCA phase in Guatemala.

16. Subject to the recommendations of the Technical Committee which will oversee the implementation of the Agreement for the Resettlement of Uprooted Populations, UNHCR may extend its good offices to cover some internally displaced persons in Ixcan as in some other specific regions where the durability of the solution for returnees cannot be separated from the attainment of a solution for internally displaced persons who resettle in the same area. It is foreseen to implement such UNHCR protection activities as documentation within an integrated solutions approach in a United Nations inter-agency framework and in coordination with the Technical Committee.

17. Likewise, the Technical Committee may promote, in compliance with the above-mentioned Agreement, modalities of socio-economic reintegration not based on land and agricultural activities. Should these efforts be successful, UNHCR may have to consider new modalities of assistance, which would most probably not be feasible before 1996.

(b) Proposed budgets for 1996

(i) General Programmes

18. **Local settlement**: The 1996 proposed allocation shows a considerable decrease in relation to the approved allocation for the same project for 1995, due to the reduction in the number of beneficiaries (from 400 to 300 persons) to be assisted under this project.

(ii) Special Programmes

19. **Repatriation/Reintegration Programme**: The reduction of the 1996 proposed allocation for both Voluntary Repatriation of Guatemalan Refugees from Mexico and Reintegration and Rehabilitation of Guatemalan Returnees Programmes as compared with the 1995 allocations, is due to the decrease in the number of refugees who are expected to repatriate (from 10,000 to 8,000 beneficiaries) during 1996.

(c) Implementing partners

20. The legal firm Bufete Paz, in close coordination with the OCM, will continue to provide legal and material assistance to refugees. The governmental agency CEAR is elaborating a strategy, with UNHCR support, for the integration of refugees.

21. CEAR will continue to be the UNHCR's main implementing partner for the reception of returnees, the delivery of basic individual/family assistance, and the provision of temporary documentation and certificates for a three-year exemption from military service for male adults. The Government will complement the returnee programme by providing administrative and operational staffing resources to CEAR and through credits for the purchase of land provided to returnees by the Fondo Nacional para la Paz (FONAPAZ). Credits for some productive activities are also provided by the Government through the Fondo de Reinserción Laboral y Productiva (FORELAP).

22. The umbrella Church organization, CONFREGUA, will continue to facilitate and provide follow-up to the issuance of personal documentation to returnees by municipal authorities.

23. CECI administers the community-focused QIPs to support the reintegration of returnees in Guatemala. The QIPs are implemented by a wide range of agencies or groupings such as NGOs, organized community groups, church dioceses and private firms through agreements made between CECI and the executing agencies. In addition, various NGOs, such as Médecins sans Frontières, Médecins du Monde and Vétérinaires sans Frontières will implement primary health care and veterinary activities during the initial phase of transportation and arrival at the destination area.

24. WFP will provide returnees with basic food supplies. In 1996, WFP will continue a Quick Action Project based on the food-for-work principle for poverty-stricken communities in areas affected by conflict. Shortages of basic

grains and the need to initiate productive activities immediately upon return are leading UNHCR and WFP to seek new modalities of food provision, which are to be defined by June 1995.

25. The objectives of the post-CIREFCA process for uprooted populations in Guatemala will be maintained through close collaboration between UNHCR and UNDP. Where possible, UNHCR will also coordinate reintegration activities with the application of UNDP's regionally-focused human development policy. The collaboration of other United Nations agencies in supporting both the repatriation and reintegration processes will be reinforced through technical or material assistance that can be offered by specialized agencies such as UNICEF, FAO, and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT). Discussions to define possible avenues of cooperation with these agencies have already advanced through the Grupo de Concertacion y Apoyo a nivel Nacional (GRUCAN), a post-CIREFCA mechanism.

(d) Programme Delivery and Administrative Support Costs

26. Variations due to changes in budget parameters are not discussed in the subsequent analysis (Overview of UNHCR Activities, Part I (A/AC.96/845) refers).

(i) 1994 expenditure (all sources of funds)

27. The 1994 expenditure was not significantly different from revised estimates.

(ii) Revised 1995 requirements (all sources of funds)

28. The revised 1995 requirements are slightly higher than the initial estimates mainly due to the creation of a P-3 post of Regional Telecommunications Officer.

(iii) Initial 1996 requirements (all sources of funds)

29. The 1996 requirements do not vary significantly from the revised 1995 estimates.

UNHCR EXPENDITURE IN GUATEMALA

(in thousands of United States dollars)

1994	1995		1996	
AMOUNT OBLIGATED	ALLOCATION APPROVED BY 1994 EXCOM	PROPOSED REVISED ALLOCATION	SOURCE OF FUNDS AND TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	PROPOSED ALLOCATION/ PROJECTION
GENERAL PROGRAMMES (1)				
38.4	47.9	–	VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION	–
70.2 a/	138.7	174.7	LOCAL SETTLEMENT	121.1
0.6 a/	–	–	RESETTLEMENT	–
–	–	76.2	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Overview Tables (Part II)	75.8
109.2	186.6	250.9	SUB–TOTAL OPERATIONS	196.9
109.2	186.6	250.9	T O T A L (1)	196.9
SPECIAL PROGRAMMES (2)				
			OTHER TRUST FUNDS	
4,965.9	5,710.0	4,908.3	REPATRIATION/RETURNEE PROGRAMME	4,000.0
1,263.7	1,273.8	1,299.4	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Overview Tables (Part II)	1,366.0
164.5	169.0	308.7	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT See Overview Tables (Part II)	311.3
117.3	115.0	165.0	Junior Professional Officer See Overview Tables (Part II)	101.0
6,511.4	7,267.8	6,681.4	T O T A L (2)	5,778.3
6,620.6	7,454.4	6,932.3	GRAND TOTAL (1+2)	5,975.2

a/ obligation incurred against Other Programmes